

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-01 SSO-00 USIE-00 PA-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 DODE-00 SCSE-00

SCA-01 L-02 /024 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

APPROVED BY NEA/P - GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. KING (INFO)

H - MISS FOLGER (INFO)

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O 101954Z OCT 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

UNCLAS STATE 223722

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING OCTOBER 10, 1974:

QUOTE: Q. JOHN, TWO AMERICANS ARE BEING HELD IN INDIA, SO
FAR WITHOUT TRIAL, I BELIEVE, ON UNSPECIFIED CHARGES. IS
ANYTHING BEING DONE ON THEIR BEHALF?

A. WELL, YES. LET ME SAY A COUPLE OF THINGS. SUBJECT
TO CHECKING THE FACTS -- I THINK THEY ARE ON BAIL NOW.
THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE CONSULAR ACCESS TO THEM. WE
ARE TALKING ABOUT MESSERS HARCOS AND FLETCHER.

I THINK YOU ARE CORRECT. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE SPECIFIC
CHARGES AGAINST THEM ARE.

BUT I DON'T THINK THERE IS ANYTHING BASICALLY NEW IN THEIR
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SITUATION.

Q. DID YOU SAY THEY ARE FREE ON BAIL? THEY ARE OUT OF JAIL?

A. I BELIEVE SO. BUT I SAY THAT SUBJECT TO CHECKING MY FACTS. I HAVEN'T LOOKED INTO THE CASE IN SOME WHILE. END QUOTE.

SUBSEQUENT TO THE BRIEFING, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS AND BECAME PART OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE BRIEFING:

ON OCTOBER 5 HARCOS AND FLETCHER WERE RELEASED FROM JAIL ON BAIL OF APPROXIMATELY \$1280 EACH. THEY ARE LIVING IN A PRIVATE APARTMENT IN CALCUTTA WHERE THEY REMAIN UNDER POLICE GUARD. BOTH MEN HAVE ENDED THEIR HUNGER STRIKE. THE PROSECUTION HAS BEGUN TO PRESENT ITS CASE, BUT FORMAL CHARGES HAVE NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED.

OUR CONSULAR OFFICER IN CALCUTTA HAS BEEN GRANTED PERMISSION TO ATTEND THE TRIAL AS A CONSULAR OBSERVER. HE IS ALSO PERMITTED TO VISIT THE DEFENDANTS THREE TIMES A WEEK AT THEIR FLAT. INGERSOLL

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